Gil H. Renberg – Franziska Naether

"I Celebrated a Fine Day". An Overlooked Egyptian Phrase in A Bilingual Letter Preserving a Dream Narrative

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"I Celebrated a Fine Day". An Overlooked Egyptian Phrase in a Bilingual Letter Preserving a Dream Narrative[1]

for Heinz-Josef Thissen on the occasion of his 70th birthday

Introduction

A bilingual papyrus of uncertain provenience featuring a single, fragmentary text beginning in Greek and then switching to Demotic has been known to the scholarly community for more than a century, but in addition to never having been published in full it also has not been the subject of a detailed study, despite several unusual and unique elements.[2] This document, which has been dated to the third century B.C., is of particular significance not only because it represents a rare specimen of Greco-Demotic bilingualism,[3] but also because it is the only example we have of a private letter that refers to a dream and then provides an account of what the dreamer had seen. However, it is a long-overlooked element that arguably makes the letter even more significant than has previously been recognized: the letter-writer's use of the unusual phrase "I celebrated a fine day", a common Egyptian expression rendered into Greek in this papyrus. The appearance of this phrase both raises issues regarding the religious context in which the letter was written and shows that scholars who, like Wilcken, have considered the papyrus a "Problem der Zweisprachigkeit" have not fully appreciated the nature of the problem. When the full ranges of linguistic, social and religious issues that this document raises are considered, its value as evidence for both religious and non-religious aspects of private life in the multicultural world of early Ptolemaic Egypt rises considerably.

That the letter's value has not been fully appreciated is largely due to the way it was published. The Greek part, which contains the letter itself, was edited and briefly commented upon by Ulrich Wilcken in the first volume of his important *Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde*, after previously having appeared without comment in Edgar J. Goodspeed's corpus of Greek papyri from Cairo and the collection of letters in Greek assembled by Stanislaw Witkowski.[4] Wilcken, whose text has become the standard, was able to incorporate some improvements to Goodspeed's edition made by himself and other commentators soon after its appearance,[5] as well as the final lines of Greek that were published in Wilhelm Spiegelberg's edition of the Demotic text, which Witkowski had overlooked. Wilcken's text, based on neither autopsy nor

[1] The authors wish to express their gratitude to Mark Depauw, Annette Hupfloher, Klaus Maresch and Heinz-Josef Thissen for reading earlier versions of this article and providing valuable feedback, and to Ludwig Koenen, Myriam Krutzsch, Michael B. Lippman, Kent J. Rigsby, and Dorothy J. Thompson for suggestions on specific issues. The late Traianos Gagos also provided significant help in the months before his untimely death, both in his capacity as administrator of the University of Michigan's papyrology research facility and on specific papyrological matters, and we greatly regret that he will not see the finished product. Much of the substance of this article was presented by Gil Renberg at the 2010 meeting of the Midwestern Consortium on Ancient Religions in Ann Arbor, and by Franziska Naether at the 2010 colloquium "Neue Forschungen zur ägyptischen Kultur und Geschichte" in Leipzig. We both have benefitted from the audience's comments. Acknowledgments are due to Hanane Gaber from the Egyptian Museum in Cairo for providing us with photographs taken by Ahmed Amin and permission to include them in this article. Thanks to the two of them we are able to prepare this new edition and make available for the first time the complete *recto* and *verso* of this important papyrus.

[2] All abbreviated citations of editions, instrumenta and corpora can be found in John F. Oates *et al*. (eds.), *Checklist of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets* (http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html). In addition, the abbreviation 'TM' is employed for entries in the Trismegistos database (http://www.trismegistos.org).

[3] The letter is one of a minute number of personal letters employing both Greek and Demotic (see Depauw [2006], 296–297). Despite this, it is often overlooked in studies of bilingualism and multiculturalism in Egypt.

[4] *Chrest.Wilck*. I 50. Wilcken later remarked further on the papyrus in *UPZ* I, p. 366–367, n. 3. Earlier editions: *P. Cair. Goodsp*. 3 and Witkowski (1911), no. 21, the latter adopting Goodspeed's text but modifying it on the basis of the improvements suggested by Crönert and Wilcken (see next note). In the Trismegistos database and the Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis, the complete text is assigned the number TM 554.

[5] The notable contributions and attempts at restorations pre-dating *Chrest.Wilck*. were made by Crönert (1903), 730–731 and (1905), 96, and Wilcken (1906), 113–114.

photos, was published a year before Witkowski provided a series of new and improved readings – some acceptable, others not – derived from a photograph.[6] The final improvements to the Greek text were subsequently made by C. C. Edgar, the last scholar to report an examination by autopsy.[7] The Demotic part appeared in Spiegelberg's catalogue of Demotic texts from the Cairo Egyptian Museum just a few years after Goodspeed's edition, but the editor did not produce a full text, instead providing a mixture of Demotic transliteration and German translation.[8] Therefore, not only have the Greek and Demotic parts of this document never been published together, but neither a complete text nor a full translation has been available, and only three poor photos from just part of the text have been available.[9] Due to the availability of new photographs of both *recto* and *verso* of each fragment (see photo plates), it has been possible not only to publish and study the Greek and Demotic texts together, but to provide a new edition along with full translation of this unique but long-neglected document.

The epistolary portion of the document, written in Greek, is addressed by an individual named Ptolemaios to another named Achilles. Due to the loss of several lines some vital information is unavailable, so the circumstances leading Ptolemaios to write his friend, associate or family member cannot be fully reconstructed. However, the surviving portions reveal that Ptolemaios was writing Achilles specifically to inform him of the contents of a dream he had received, quite possibly after soliciting it by some form of dream-divination, and that in some way drinking and celebration were called for. Following the end of the Greek letter, Ptolemaios switches over to Demotic and provides a detailed narrative of his dream, which begins on the *recto* and concludes on the *verso*. According to this account, Ptolemaios found himself at a temple listening to a priest make several cryptic pronouncements to those around him, at least some of which directly pertained to Ptolemaios and his concerns.[10] Finally, at the very end of the Demotic passage the god Psais/Shaï is invoked – a god whose association with Hathor may have particular significance in this context.

Text and Translation

The papyrus survives in three non-joining fragments, the measurements of which are recorded as 5 x 11.7 (*frag.* 1), 11 x 11.5 (*frag.* 2), and 6 x 11.7 centimeters (*frag.* 3).[11] Eighteen full lines and one incomplete one

[6] Witkowski (1913), 19–22. (These new readings were attributed by Preisigke in *BL* 1, 171–172 to a letter from Witkowski rather than the article.)

[7] Edgar (1924), 246–247 (adopted in *BL* 2.2, 186).

[8] *P. Cair.* II 30961 + Pl. 70. This catalog entry includes all three Demotic fragments, two of which have different inventory numbers (see n. 11).

[9] Like the Greek editions preceding it, the partial translation provided in Bagnall/Derow (2004), no. 136 omits the Demotic half completely; the only Demotic edition, that of Spiegelberg, incorporated the Greek content in part, while translating the Demotic portion, though not satisfactorily, into German.

[10] This dream-narrative is typically obscure in meaning, as is the case with the numerous Demotic dream accounts from Saqqara (*i.e.*, those of the Ḥor and Ptolemaios archives), among others. Attempts to find out more about the individuals involved in Ptolemaios's dream based on his brief and partly missing description must remain little more than speculative.

[11] Cairo Mus. Inv. Nos. 10313 (*frag.* 1), 10328 (*frag.* 2), 30961 (*frag.* 3). *Frag.* 2 is itself comprised of three joining pieces that have been taped together by tissue (maybe English adhesive plaster) with a small piece of papyrus being slightly misplaced (on the *recto* between lines 5 and 6). The gaps between the fragments appear large enough to suggest that one or two other fragments bearing text may still be extant. In particular, the space between *frags.* 2 and 3 must have been quite wide, as is indicated by the position of the two in the glass frame in Cairo, according to the photograph. Myriam Krutzsch suggests an original length for the papyrus of between 30 and 34 cm – meaning that 8–12 cm are missing – based on the general width of the papyrus rolls of that time as well as the way this letter appears to have been folded (personal communication). In her opinion, the papyrus represents a typically folded letter. First, the letter was folded horizontally in the middle to create two halves and next it was folded horizontally from top to bottom a few additional times – the number cannot be reconstructed with certainty due to the changing rhythm of the foldings – to form a narrow package, before it was folded perpendicularly in the middle. Finally, the letter most likely would have been tied up and sealed by a *bulla*. Since the edges of the fragments which run through text are uneven and do not occur along folds, it is unlikely that the papyrus was cut up by an antiquities dealer. Instead, these cuts would have been made during either the production or the dissolution (or both) of mummy *cartonnage* for which the letter had been reused. This is evident in the lighter color of *frag.* 3, *recto* compared with the two other fragments and the whitish traces of gypsum, as was first suggested to us by Maresch and confirmed by Krutzsch. The remains of what could be paper on top of *frag.* 1, *verso*, however, are not related to this *cartonnage*, but rather appear to be the result of improper storage of the papyrus

of Greek and three of Demotic are preserved on the *recto*, in addition to illegible traces from two lines of Greek and one of Demotic where the papyrus was cut. Other than the one-line address in Greek, the *verso* is written entirely in Demotic, and includes eight full lines from this letter and an illegible line, as well as five illegible, unrelated lines of text written in a different hand. Ptolemaios (or his scribe) appears to have possessed a fairly well trained hand, writing both the Greek and Demotic texts semi-cursively and without obvious errors. The signs of the unrelated Demotic text on the *verso* are smaller and the scribe's handwriting narrower, which makes those lines much harder to decipher. Neither of the scholars who first edited the Greek and Demotic texts knew where the papyrus originated: Goodspeed recorded only that *frag.* 1 came from the Fayoum, while Spiegelberg indicated that *frag.* 3 might be from Gebelein but also observed that since B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt had thought that *frag.* 2 was "probably from Gurob (Fayoum)" this may well have been true of *frag.* 3.[12] Since the recipient of this letter appears to have been at the Fayoum town of Theadelphia or Philadelphia, located roughly twenty and thirty miles from Gurob, respectively, this is possible, though by no means certain. The link to Gebelein, which Spiegelberg did not explain, is even less reliable, since this document may have been among the large number of papyri in his corpus that he assigned to Gebelein through simple guesswork. The papyrus, therefore, should be considered to be of unknown provenience, rather than linked to one of these sites because of statistical probability. However, several papyri treated by Spiegelberg in *P. Cair.* II with no findspot or an uncertain one proved to originate from Gebelein, as was shown by later studies, so his guesses are not without credibility.[13]

frag. 1, *recto*

1 μετὰ τὸ δέξαι	After having received (?) (a letter from you,
(*space*)	I wrote this?).
2 Πτολεμαῖος Ἀχιλλεῖ χαίρειν.	Ptolemaios gives Achilles greetings.
3 μετὰ τὸ γράψαι cοι περὶ τοῦ	After having written to you concerning the
4 (*Letter trace visible*)	…
(*1–3 additional lines missing*)	

frag. 2, *recto*

1 [ἔδο]ξέν [μο]ι κ[α]ὶ περὶ τοῦ	… it also (?) seemed good to me that I
2 ὁράματος διασαφῆcαί cοι,	should fully inform you about my dream,
3 ὅπωc εἰδῆιc (= εἰδῇc) ὃν τρόπον	so that you will know in what way
4 οἱ θεοί cε οἴδαcιν. Αἰγυπτιc-	the gods know you. I have
5 τὶ δὲ ὑπέγραψα, ὅπωc	written below in Egyptian so that
6 ἀκριβῶc εἰδῆιc. ἡνίκα	you will know precisely. When
7 ἤμελλον κοιμηθῆναι,	I was about to go to sleep,
8 ἔγραψα ἐπιcτόλια β, ἓν μὲν	I wrote two short letters, the one
9 περὶ Ταύγχιος τῆς ἐκ	concerning Taunchis the daughter of
10 Θερμού[θι]ος, ἓν δὲ περὶ Τετε-	Thermouthis and the other concerning Tete-
11 ϊμούθιος τῆς Ταυῆτος, ἥ ἐcτιν	imouthis the daughter of Taues, who is

soon after its discovery. In addition, the papyrus might not have been cut from a roll for the purpose of letter-writing in the first place, but could have been a leftover portion of lower quality or attractiveness ("Verschnittstück") found between two parts of the roll intended for writings of higher decorum. This observation of Krutzsch is supported by a *kollesis* running along the right edge of the *recto*. It is also worth noting that there seem to be traces of spilled ink between lines 1 and 2 as well as above line 1 of *frag.* 1, *recto* – Witkowski (1913), 20 noted the traces of the latter – and on *frag.* 2, *verso*, which could result from imprints of other documents while glued together in *cartonnage*.

[12] *P. Cair.Cat.*, pp. 41, 43. Grenfell and Hunt believed that these were among the Cairo Museum papyri from the Fayoum that had been reused as mummy *cartonnage* and were closely related to the *Flinders Petrie Papyri* (*P. Petr.* I–II), edited by J. P. Mahaffy, that had come from the Gurob necropolis (see Martin/Nachtergael [1997], 295–296). The link to Gurob has been tentatively accepted by the Trismegistos database ("in Gurob(?)") and again in Depauw (2009), 132, no. 7.

[13] Cf. e.g. *BL Dem.* vol. A, *ad locum*, for *P. Cair.* II 30667, 30808 or 31019.

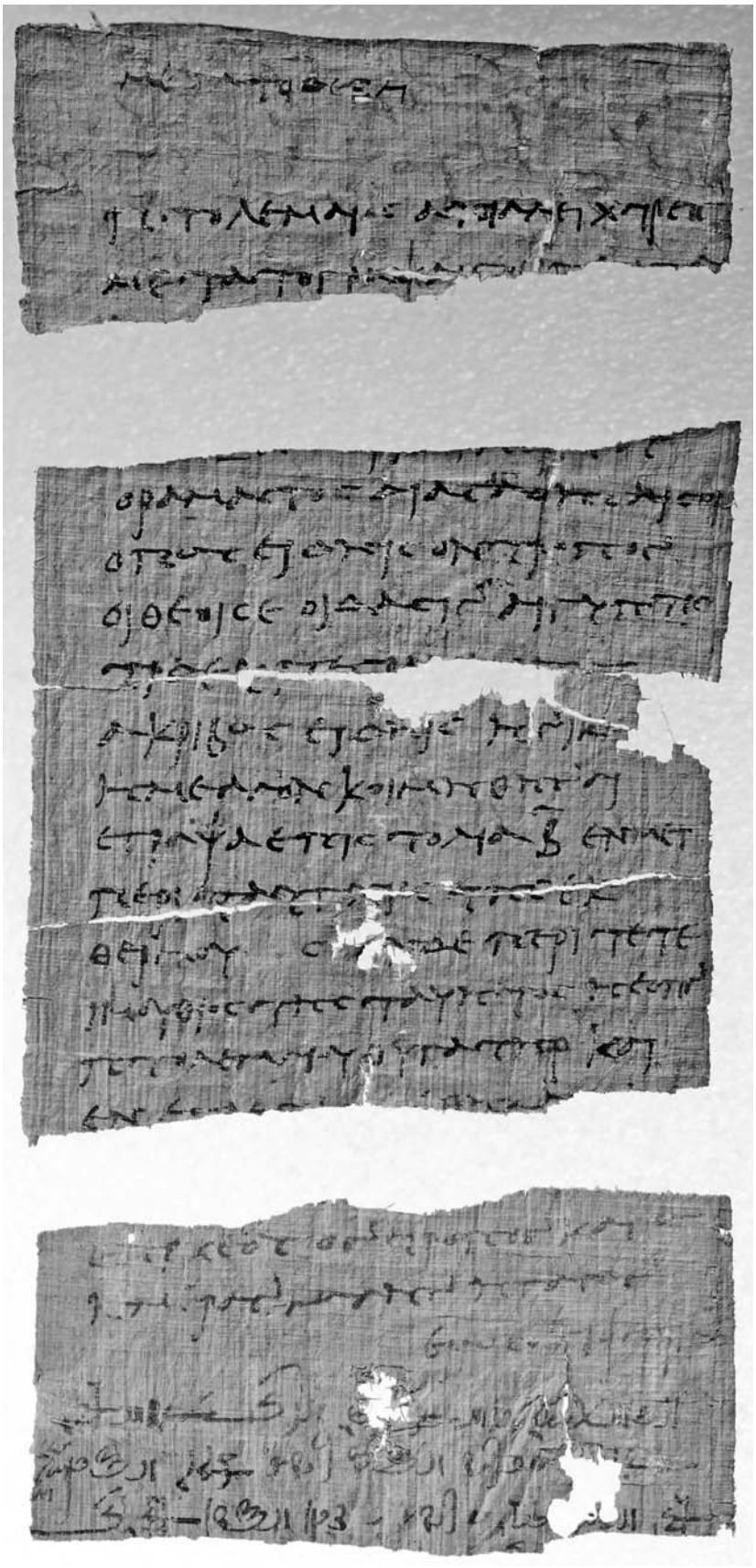

Plate 1. Cairo Mus. Inv. Nos. 10313. 10328. 30961 recto

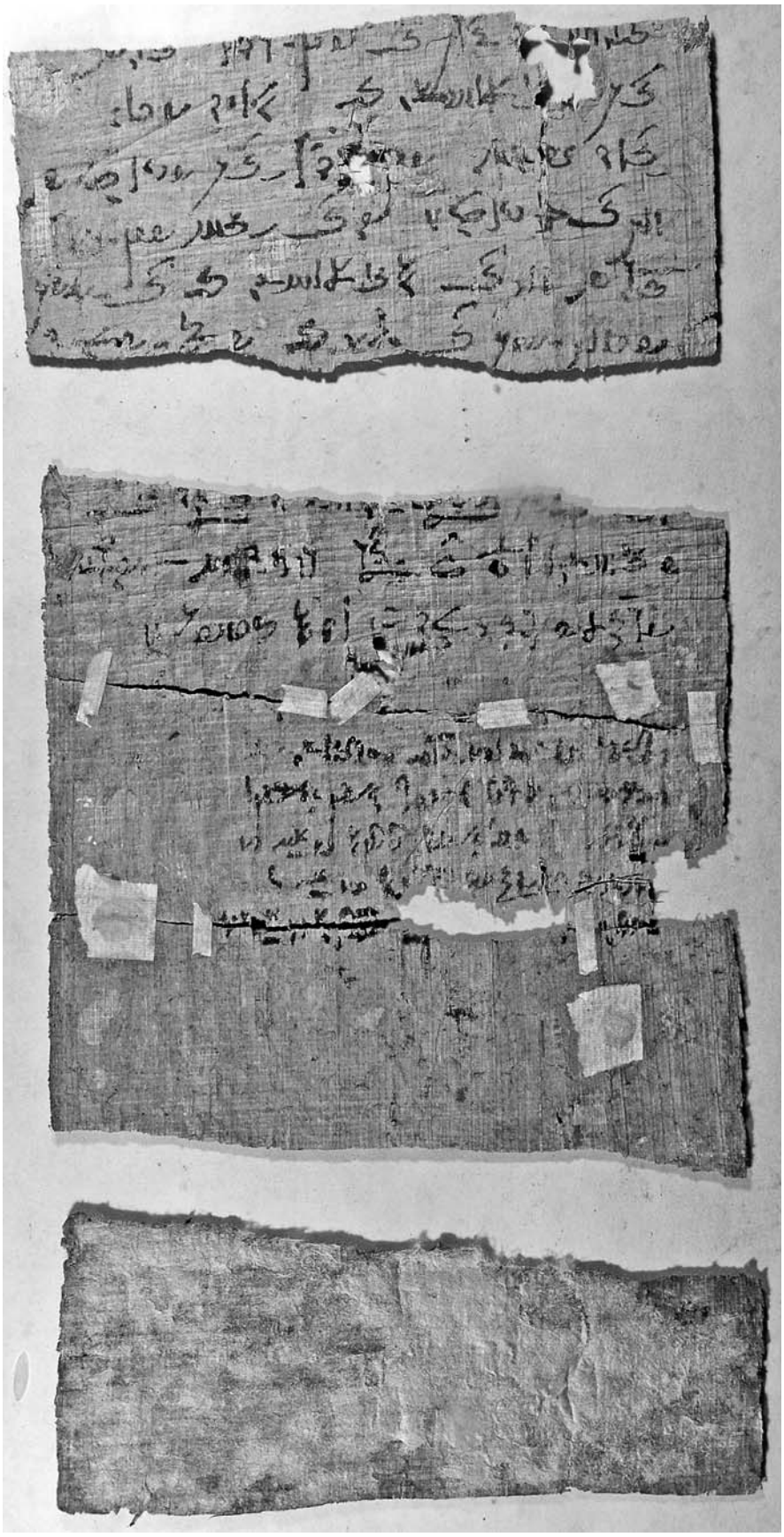

Plate 2. Cairo Mus. Inv. Nos. 30961. 10328. 10313 verso

12 Πτολεμαίου θυγάτηρ, καὶ
13 ἓν ἔτι ἐξιὼ[ν] ἔθηκα .[.].[.].
(*Several lines missing*)

the daughter of Ptolemaios, and
yet one more exiting (?) I placed …

frag. 3, *recto*

1 (*Unidentifiable letter traces visible*)
2 ἐπιχέου, ὃν τρόπον κἀγὼ
3 ἡμέραν καλὴν ἤγαγον.
4 ἔρρωco. (ἔτους) β′ Φαῶφι κ̄ς̄.
5 *i-ir=y nw r-ḥr=y n rsʳw.tˡ iw=w ḏd tw=y ʿḥʿ*
6 *r pȝ rȝ [n] pȝ nty wʿb iw wn wʿ wʿb ḥms iw wn rmṯ ʿšȝ*
7 *ʿhʿ irm=f mt pȝ wʿb n nȝ rmṯ.w iw wn-nȝw ʿhʿ ḏd*
8 [---] (*Letter traces visible, additional lines missing*)

…
pour a drink for (or anoint) yourself, in
which manner I too celebrated a fine day.
Farewell. Year 2, Phaophi 26.
I saw myself in a dream in the following
way: I am standing
at the doorway of the sanctuary. A priest is
sitting there, and many people
are standing beside him. The priest spoke to
the people who were standing there:
"…"

frag. 3, *verso*

1 *mt=y [pȝ wʿ]b rn=f ḏd pȝ rmṯ n Pa-Imn(?) nm pȝy*
2 *ḏd=f Nb(.t)-wḏy tȝy tw=s pȝ wȝḥ*
3 *r-ḏd=w n=y ḫr-ḥr=y pȝ rmṯ n Pa-Imn(?) r-ḏd=f pȝ ʿnḫ pȝy*
4 *iw=f ḏd Ta-ʿnḫ iw=s ḏd r-ir=y pȝ rmṯ n Pa-Imn*
5 *nm pȝy iw=f ḏd Nb(.t)-wḏy tȝy-ḏd n-im=f*
6 *pȝ nty-iw=f n-im=f ḏd sḥm.t tȝy pȝ-bnr n pȝ di.t n=y (?)*
(*No letter traces visible, additional lines missing*)

I spoke [to the] aforementioned [prie]st:
'The man of Pamoun – who is it?'
He said: 'It is Nebwotis.' See, the answer
which they gave me: the man of Pamoun
whom he named: 'He is/That's life.'
He says: 'Taunchis', (and) she said to me:
'The man of Pamoun,
who is it?' He said: 'Nebwotis is it, who has said it.'
The one who is there says: 'A woman is it
outside giving to me (?) …'"

frag. 2, *verso*

1 […… ʳ*r . i-ir-ḥr=k*ˡ *n nȝ-i-ir(?)… twn(?)=k s*(or *n=y*?) *ḏd*]
2 *Pȝ-Šy <pȝ> nṯr ʿȝ rḫ rn=k swn=y(?) n-im=s n ḥȝṯ*
3 *pȝ sḫn nfr st ir-rḫ s sḫ ḥȝ.t-sp 2.t ibd 2 ȝḫ.t sw 26*
4-8 [*The five unrelated and indecipherable lines that follow are written in a different hand*.]

"..."

Psais, <the> great god, knows your name, I
recognized (?) it in my heart.
The good order, may it be known. Written
in Year 2, Phaophi 26.

frag. 1, *verso*

1 εἰς [Φιλ-? Θε?]αδέλφειαν, Ἀχιλλεῖ.

To (Phil-? The-?)adelphia, for Achilles.

Notes on the Greek Text

frag. 1, *recto*

L. 1: μετὰ τὸ δέξαι, Goodspeed; με̣[τ]ὰ̣ τὸ δέξαι, Witkowski (1913); μετὰ δὸ δέξαι (?), Wilcken (*Chrest. Wilck.*). The ungrammatical first line of this papyrus has been the subject of much debate, both in terms of whether it was written deliberately and how it should be interpreted. In a detailed note on the subject in his treatment of the papyrus, Witkowski explored several possibilities, some purely hypothetical (Witkowski [1913], 20–21). Witkowski suggested that Ptolemaios had made a mistake, proposing two different explanations for the nature of the mistake: either Ptolemaios had intended μετὰ τὸ γράψαι but wrote μετὰ τὸ δέξαι, or he meant to write μετὰ τὸ δεῖξαι but omitted the *iota*. If writing μετὰ τὸ δέξαι was indeed an error, then after noticing this, Witkowski speculates, Ptolemaios had restarted his letter, intending to tear off the false start but then forgetting to do so. Or, he suggests, Ptolemaios ended up recopying his letter onto another papyrus – a rather unlikely suggestion, in light of how easy it would have been to erase three short words if desired. If Ptolemaios did intend to write δέξαι (meaning δεῖξαι), Witkowski continues, it was meant to convey the same meaning as γράψαι, though he also suggests, implausibly, that it should be read as an imperative. Responding to the one other reading that had already been put forward at the time, Witkowski concluded his discussion by dismissing Wilhelm Crönert's suggestion that this line should be translated "Nachdem ich (deinen Brief) erhalten habe, (schreibe ich dieses)", which required that the infinitive δέξασθαι was intended (Crönert [1905], 96). In a brief note Wilcken likewise rejected this suggestion, confessing himself at a loss regarding the meaning of μετὰ τὸ δέξαι (*Chrest.Wilck*. I, p. 74, n. 1). Crönert's position later received support from Stylianos G. Kapsomenos, who cited lines 1 and 3 as examples of μετά being used in the sense of ἅμα, *i.e.* "ἅμα τῷ δέξασθαι" and "ἅμα τῷ γράψαι" (Kapsomenos [1957], 354). Preisigke, on the other hand, had earlier echoed one of Witkowski's suggestions, that this first line was completely in error, both in terms of Ptolemaios beginning the letter prematurely – *i.e.*, before writing the greeting – and accidentally writing μετὰ τὸ δέξαι rather than μετὰ τὸ γράψαι, and thus having to start the letter over at line 2 (*BL* 1, 171). (Since Preisigke in his *Berichtigungsliste* entry for this papyrus said that he was recording the contents of a letter from Witkowski and does not mention the 1913 article in which these observations appeared it is unclear whether Witkowski likewise wrote him concerning this line or these represent his own thoughts.) While there is no clear-cut solution to this problem, it appears significant that this line is written in slightly smaller letters and is separated from the rest of the text by a blank line, giving the sense of a label or preface – a sense only reinforced by its preceding the address in line 2. If so, this might have been a note that Ptolemaios wrote more for himself than Achilles, the meaning of which can only be guessed at. It is likewise unclear whether there is a link between this problematic phrase and the possibility, suggested by Ptolemaios's following his opening of "After having written you concerning the …" with "it also (?) seemed good to me that I should fully inform you about my dream", that this letter was written as a private postscript to another letter that he had recently sent. This would make an intended meaning of μετὰ τὸ δέξασθαι more probable than the suggestion that this first line was a false start.

Wilcken's use of δὸ instead of τὸ was a typographical error, but has since been replicated elsewhere.

L. 3: γράψαι περὶ τοῦ, Goodspeed, Wilcken (*Chrest.Wilck.*); γράψαι ̣ο̣ι̣ π̣ερ̣ὶ τοῦ, Witkowski (1913). The tops of the letters of σοι are clearly visible and cannot easily be confused with περὶ, suggesting that Goodspeed left the word out of his text by mistake rather than a misreading, and was followed by Wilcken.

L. 4: A single fleck of ink from top of the first letter of this line is visible. The document's syntax and the shape of the fragments indicate that 1–3 other lines are missing.

frag. 2, *recto*

L. 1: [ἔδο]ξέ̣ [μο]ι ν[ῦ]ν̣, Goodspeed, Wilcken (*Chrest.Wilck.*); [...]ξ̣[.....] τ̣οῦ, Witkowski (1913); [ἔδο]ξέ̣ν̣ [μο]ι [κα]ὶ περὶ τοῦ, Edgar (1924), 246. Since we do not know the nature of the text that appears to be missing between this and the previous fragment it is unclear whether καί was intended to add emphasis or indicate a change of subject matter.

LL. 3–4: For the possibility that the phrase ὃν τρόπον οἱ θεοί σε οἴδασιν represents an Egyptian religious concept, see "Comments", section 2.

LL. 4–5: Αἰγύπτιο[ι]. | τί, Goodspeed; Αἰγυπτιcτί, Crönert (1903), 730, Wilcken ([1906], 113–114; *Chrest.Wilck*.).

L. 9: The female personal name Taunchis (Gr. Ταϋγχις, Dem. *Ta-ʿnḥ*) is mentioned again in frag. 3, verso, l. 4, in the Egyptian text, where it is involved in a wordplay with *ʿnḥ* ("life") in the preceding line. Cf. *NB Dem*. 1168.

LL. 10–11: Based on examination of a photograph, Witkowski suggested reading Πετεϊμούθιος rather than Τετεϊμούθιος (Witkowski [1913], 20; cf. *BL* 1, 172), but Wilcken objected on the grounds that there had to be a feminine name (*UPZ* I, p. 366, n. 3). The new, high-resolution images confirm Goodspeed's original reading and vindicate Wilcken.

LL. 10–12: Although Ptolemaios was a common name, it is worth considering the possibility that the Ptolemaios identified as father of Taues and grandfather of Teteimouthis was the author of this letter. This would require his having referred to himself in the third person, which would not be expected in a letter employing first-person pronouns elsewhere. However, since the reference to a Ptolemaios is made in the context of a filiation, it may be that the letter-writer Ptolemaios briefly switched to the Egyptian practice of referring to himself in the third person (without an explanation such as *t3y=y šr.t*, "my daughter") while indicating his relationship to one of the two women about whom he had written the two ἐπιστόλια.

L. 13: ενεc.ecι.ν ἔθηκα …, Goodspeed; ἓν ἐc [δ]éc[μη]ν ἔθηκα, Crönert (1905); ενεc.ecι. νέθηκα …, Witkowski (1911), Wilcken (*Chrest.Wilck*.); ἐν ἐc[θ]écι (= ἐcθῆcι) ἐνέθηκα, Koukoules; ενετ̣ε̣ (*vel* ενεπ̣ε̣) c̣ι̣ (*vel* τ̣ι̣/c̣τ̣ι̣/π̣ι̣) [*c*. 2–3] ο̣μ̣α̣μ̣, Witkowski (1913); ἓν ἔτ̣ι̣ ἐξ̣ι̣ὼν ἔθηκα [.].[.], Edgar. Edgar's reading of ἔτι ἐξιών is not certain, but is an improvement over previous readings and restorations despite its unclear meaning in this context and the likelihood that the preceding use of ἕν introduces a third letter to Ptolemaios's narrative – a letter presumably written earlier in the evening or brought by Ptolemaios, perhaps on someone else's behalf (see "Comments", section 4). Edgar, who examined the papyrus directly, was undoubtedly correct in stating that Crönert's restoration is "impossible" (Edgar [1924], 246), while Koukoules's suggestion likewise can be dismissed, as it does not fit the surviving traces either (Koukoules [1912], 482). Witkowski's tentative suggestion of ἐνέπεσον (εἰς ὕπνον) is a better fit (Witkowski [1913], 20), but the slight gap following EN suggests that it forms a separate word, while the letter that would need to be identified as the top of a Π more closely matches the TI ligature seen twice in ll. 4–5; moreover, his reading of ο̣μ̣α̣μ̣ cannot be supported. Although these other attempts at restoration of the line are more easily dismissed than that of Edgar, neither the surviving letter traces from the word read as ἐξιών nor the context within which it appears give one great confidence in this reading of the line. Following this word are flecks of ink appearing to belong to three letters, though Edgar indicated just one.

frag. 3, *recto*

These lines of Greek, first appearing in Spiegelberg's Demotic edition, were omitted in treatments of the text preceding *Chrest.Wilck*.

L. 1: Traces from the bottoms of two unidentifiable letters are visible. Judging from the letter's contents, it is possible that one or more additional lines are missing.

LL. 2–3: For the significance of the phrase ἐγὼ ἡμέραν καλὴν ἤγαγον, see "Comments", section 1.

L. 4: Φαῶφι κε, Spiegelberg, Wilcken (*Chrest.Wilck*.). The letter following the *kappa* does not closely resemble the other examples of *epsilon*, and since the date in the Demotic text is Phaophi 26 this letter undoubtedly should be read as *stigma*. (This has been confirmed by several scholars, including participants of the 26th International Congress of Papyrology in Geneva, to whom we express our sincere thanks.) The writing of this line extends fairly to the right end of the papyrus, leaving almost no margin. This practice continues with the lines in Demotic that follow. See below, under "Date".

frag. 1, *verso*

L. 1: The address was first noted by C. C. Edgar, who suggested the restorations of Φιλαδέλφειαν or Θεαδέλφειαν (Edgar [1924], 246–247) for the name of the town. However, it is barely discernable, since this part of the papyrus must have been glued to paper and improperly detached from it at a later stage, leaving a considerable amount of paper atop the writing (see n. 11). Even though nothing but the initial *epsilon* from εἰς and the *epsilon-iota* from Ἀχιλλεῖ is easily recognizable, there is little reason to question Edgar's reading, especially since he had the advantage of examining the papyrus directly.

Notes on the Demotic Text

frag. 3, *recto*

L. 5: *i-ir=y nw r-ḥr=y n rs⸢w.t⸣* and *iw=w ḏd*: For these formulations, the latter a standard introduction for dream accounts, see Ray (1987), 87–89. Spiegelberg did not recognize *rsw.t* and read tentatively *nw(?)*, which can now be confirmed.

L. 6: The reading of *rꜣ* as suggested by Spiegelberg is certain even though the word's ending lies in the *lacuna*; cf. Erichsen, *Glossar*, 240, for representative examples.

The *ʿšꜣ* has been squeezed between the *rmṯ* and the edge of the papyrus. In lines 4–7, Ptolemaios left no margins at the right and left edges.

L. 8: Traces of two signs are visible. An unknown number of lines are missing before the text resumes in the next fragment.

frag. 3, *verso*

L. 1: The verb *mt* ("to say, speak") is to be preferred to *gm* ("to find"), which was transliterated with question mark by Spiegelberg.

For the personal name *Pa-Imn(?)*, see *NB Dem.* 350. It is also possible that the *pꜣ rmṯ* before *Pa-Imn(?)* belongs to a yet unattested personal name, *Prempamoun. For such name formations beginning with *pꜣ rmṯ*, see e.g. *NB Dem.* 195, s.v. *Pꜣ rmṯ Inpw*. Rather than a personal name, an alternative interpretation would be "the man (= the servant, colleague etc.) of Pamoun".

L. 3: The reading *ḫr-ḥr=y n(?)* + personal name fits the Demotic better than Spiegelberg's *ḫr-r-i* + personal name, since there is more visible than the *r* from the second part of the compound preposition. Above all, this reading is not satisfying. *Ḥm-ntr* ("priest") or *ḫr mn* ("concerning person NN") have alternatively been suggested by M. Depauw and H.-J. Thissen (personal communication). Additionally, we cannot detect the sign Spiegelberg read as "*n (?)*" near the end of this line.

ʿnḫ ("life") could also be a defective writing of *ʿnḫ* ("oath"). This sentence is difficult to understand due to the unclear dream context.

L. 5: For the female name *Nb(.t)-wḏy*, "Lady of the Udjat-Eye", see *NB Dem.* 638. Unlike the other names in this papyrus, two of which (Ptolemaios, Achilles) are much too common to suggest a provenance, the name Nebwotis is attested in seven different texts excavated in multiple sites in Lower Egypt. A male form of *Nb(.t)-wḏy* is not attested, but there is twice a mention of a (male) Arnebouat (Ἀρνεβουατ) as the initial and final word of a string of *voces magicae* in *Pap. Graec. Mag.* XIII 766–767 (see Preisendanz, *ad loc.*). Though several more documents with this female name have been published which are not included in the *Demotisches Namenbuch* but are in the yet unpublished version of the *Trismegistos: People* database, this picture has not changed.

L. 6: The reading *pꜣ-bnr n* can be restored here. Spiegelberg in his *editio princeps* did not provide a reading.

Instead of "giving to me", *n pꜣ di.t n=y (?)* might be translated as "fighting with me" (Erichsen, *Glossar*, 606, s.v. *tj*). For *n=y* ("to/for/with me") it also might be possible to read *s* ("it").

The cut between *frags.* 3 and 2 *verso* runs under this line. Though letter traces from a seventh line are not visible, it is highly probable that additional lines are missing, as appears to be the case with the *recto*. (On the way that this papyrus was cut, see n. 11.)

frag. 2, *verso*

L. 1: This line was cut through the middle, and the remaining traces do not allow a proper transliteration and translation. Because of this, Spiegelberg (*P. Cair.* II, p. 201) offers lines 2 and 3 in a rough German translation only. H.-J. Thissen has suggested the reading of *twn* "to rise" (personal communication); cf. Erichsen, *Glossar*, 614.

L. 2: The reading of *swn* must be treated with caution. For a combination of the words *swn* ("recognize") and *ḥꜣṯ (?)* ("heart") proposed here, see the instruction of the "Great Demotic Wisdom Text" of *P. Insinger* 4, 23 and 5, 7–8: "The one who recognizes (*swn*) his heart (*ḥꜣṯ=f*), recognizes fate (Psais/Shaï) and he (= the god) recognizes the enemy of the gods and the man of the god by his (= their) heart(s)." For a translation of the qualitative with an optative meaning, see the discussion in Thissen (1989), note to no. 2. Due to the damage to line 1 and the *lacuna* before it we do not know if this expression in l. 2 belongs to the dream narrative or to sentences Ptolemaios addresses to Achilles, so there remains the possibility that this could be an epistolary formula. If the latter, then according to Mark Depauw's classification system in his *Demotic Letter* (Depauw [2006]) this would refer to a "pious wish" among formulae expressing "final courtesy", and might match with an occurence in a wisdom text. (See following note.)

L. 3: For the epistolary closing formula *pꜣ sḏm nfr st ir-rḫ s* see Depauw (2006), 231–235, arguing that it might be a "convoluted reinterpretation" of the Greek salute εὐτύχει ("with good fortune"), but indicating that because of this papyrus's fragmentary preservation the context in which the phrase was used by Ptolemaios is unknown. On pp. 213–216, Depauw lists only nine examples of "pious wishes for the future" in his category "final courtesy". He concludes that good wishes involving appeals to divinities were not very common in Demotic letters. Additionally, the formulae he presents do not correspond with the one preserved in this papyrus. Since *pꜣ sḏm nfr st ir-rḫ s* represents a fitting rendering of εὐτύχει in Demotic, Depauw's explanation offers the best solution so far.

LL. 4–8: Spiegelberg stated here: "Den folgenden 5 von anderer Hand herrührenden Zeilen vermag ich nichts zu entnehmen." According to the photo, the script is too abraded to allow any coherent reading, but after a closer examination it was possible to exclude that this passage is linked to the letter with the dream description. These five lines present a list of goods in a certain quantity to be delivered to an unknown sender. The first line eventually starts with *nꜣ swt.w ḫr nꜣ ꜥ.wy.w(?)…* "The deliveries for the houses … (?)", with *nꜣ swt.w* maybe appearing again at the end of the line.

In the second line, an unread good should have been shipped, with the indication of a five as number or quantity of a unit, after which there follows *ḫrš grbꜣ.w* ("bundles of seeds of carob trees", or "Johannisbrotbaumkerne"; cf. Erichsen, *Glossar*, 584; e.g. in *O. Strasb.* 54, 6). More numbers are visible, as the fraction 1/6 in the third line, later on *kꜥkꜥ*-bread and *ꜥq* ("rations"), another word and the number four. From these bits and pieces, it is obvious that the five lines consist of another type of text probably written at a later stage: the papyrus has been reused for a documentary text, maybe a list or a note of delivery.[14]

After these five lines, the Demotic writing comes to an end and a wide margin concludes this fragment. This margin must have been even larger, due to the missing part between *frags.* 2 and 1 *verso*. Following it is the address, which was written in Greek (*frag.* 1, *verso*; see above).

Date

Both the Greek and Demotic texts provide Phaophi 26 of the second year of an unidentified king's reign as the date on which Ptolemaios wrote his letter. Since it dates palaeographically to the third century BC, this means that it was written on one of the following three days: December 27, 284 BC (under Ptolemy II); December 18, 246 BC (Ptolemy III); or, December 11, 221 BC (Ptolemy IV).[15] This might be narrowed down by taking into consideration Willy Clarysse's analysis comparing papyri written with a rush and those written with a κάλαμος. Clarysse has proposed that by 230 BC the κάλαμος had more or less

[14] We have profited from the help of M. Depauw and H.-J. Thissen while dealing with this complicated passage.

[15] Calculated through Frank Grieshaber's *Date Converter* (http://aegyptologie.online-resourcen.de/Date_converter_for_Ancient_Egypt).

replaced the traditional rush as writing tool, especially in Greek papyri, while Demotic scribes had mostly converted by Roman times.[16] Since both the Greek and Demotic passages of Ptolemaios's letter were written with a κάλαμος, one might opt for the date under either Ptolemy III or IV.

Comments

1. The Egyptian phrase "fine day" and its religious context

The final Greek phrase, "I celebrated a fine day" (ἐγὼ ἡμέραν καλὴν ἤγαγον), is not otherwise attested in the papyri or Greek literature and thus represents an unknown idiomatic expression – the best explanation for which is that it was a translation of a common Egyptian phrase.[17] This phrase has more than sixty parallels in Middle, Late and Demotic Egyptian literary and funerary texts and on inscribed statues. It is attested at least as far back as the Middle Kingdom and until the Roman period,[18] and typically was written *ir hrw nfr*, meaning "to celebrate (lit. make, that is to have, to spend etc.) a fine day", often with a connotation of celebration and festivity.[19] It consists of two lemmata: *hrw* "day" and *nfr* "good, beautiful". In combination, these point to a special day with activities different from the daily routine.[20] In an "official" sense, the *hrw nfr* includes religious festivals,[21] which typically featured oracular processions of divinities and other ritual actions, especially those involving drinking, eating, singing and sexual activities intended to appease the destructive powers of divinities. In a more private context, "spending a fine day" alludes to several ways of finding amusement and enjoying life, mainly through drinking, partying or having sex.

In scholarly discussion, the meaning of "celebrating a fine day" has often been reduced to the observance of certain occasions, and not all elements which comprise it have been taken into consideration.[22] This is especially true of the sexual connotations of the *hrw nfr*, which have been rejected even when in explicit sources, presumably because it did not fit into certain scholars' views assigning a chaste and prudish life to their idealized Egyptians.[23] Mark Depauw and Mark Smith, however, have discussed a broader range

[16] Clarysse (1993), 188–193.

[17] As checked in *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* and the *Duke Database of Documentary papyri* (via the *Papyrological Navigator*). Preisigke, *WB* vol. 3, Abschnitt 20, 372, *s.v.* ἡμέρα refers to a "good day" (ἀγαθὴ ἡμέρα) in *P. Abinn.* 23.10–11 (= *P. Gen.* I 61, 10–11), to which can be added *SB* XIV 12077, l. 1 (published by Youtie [1976], 99–100, no. 2), both from Late Antiquity. This does not correspond to the phrase discussed here, though both imply festive events (the latter "the lucky day of the marriage"). Youtie also referred to calendars of lucky and unlucky days which doubtlessly form part of the cultural background in determining auspicious days. On these, see Naether/Ross (2008). – While finishing this article, it came to our attention that Mark Depauw briefly mentions this link between the Greek and Egyptian phrases, but this has been overlooked otherwise, as has the potential significance of the expression for our understanding of the religious circumstances to which it potentially alludes (Depauw [2009], 119 and 132, no. 7).

[18] To our knowledge, the "fine day"-phrase did not survive into Coptic. Most prominently, *ir hrw nfr* appears in Egyptian literature in *P. Westcar* at three different points, in the stories about the unfaithful wife of Ubainer (col. 3, 9–10), about King Snofru being released of his boredom (col. 6, 13), and about Rawoser and his wife Ruddedet (col. 12, 8), the latter pertaining to a private festival. These texts might originate from the 12th dynasty (ca. 1991–1802 BC), as Assmann (1991), 208–209 postulates. See also Lepper (2008), 21 *et pass.*

[19] See Erichsen, *Glossar*, 278, *s.v. hrw*. As is argued below ("Comments", section 3), the author's likely Egyptian ethnicity supports reading the Greek phrase as a translation of the Egyptian, even if a few parallels employing similar language exist in the Greek sources.

[20] An alternate version seems to be *hrw ʿn* ("beautiful day"), as attested in a recently published Demotic literary papyrus (Tait [2008/2009], 122, commentary to l. 8). See also Assmann (1991), 213, n. 57, which points to a corresponding phrase in Hebrew: *yom tov* (Yiddish *yon-tev*) also meaning "fine day".

[21] See Grimm (1994), Chapt. III. 5, *s.v. jrj(t) hrw nfr* – "Verbringen eines schönen Tages". Grimm at p. 359 provides an index of this phrase's appearances in festival calendars, but does not offer any commentary.

[22] See e.g. Kessler (1988), 184 for his biased treatment of the famous Turin papyrus 55001 (noted for its erotic and other drawings), especially his argument that the "fine day" should be reduced to a "fester Teil des königlichen Neujahrsgeschehens" expressing the rejuvenation of the king in a ritual involving a concubine that parallels the *Hieros Gamos* (*i.e.*, ritual wedding) of the sun god Re and his daughter Hathor.

[23] See, e.g., the attempt at explanation by Lorton (1975), 29, who concludes in his essay that the *hrw nfr* phrase is "… applied to the enjoyment of a fine meal, whether secular or religious" (criticized, e.g., by Assmann [1977], 79). Similarly, in

of meanings for the phrase at length in their commentary on two ritual *ostraca* before the Goddess Ay/Nehemanit in which the "full inventory" belonging to cultic celebrations during a *hrw nfr* is mentioned: the goddess' fierce and destructive forces are calmed by festivals in which her followers engaged in celebrating, namely by drinking (*swr*) until getting drunk (*tḫy*), eating (*wmn*), singing and praising (*ḥs*) and having sex (*nq*). The pleasures of the worshippers result in the divinity's benevolence.[24] Depauw and Smith conclude that this formulation "… undoubtedly had erotic connotations, without necessarily implying sexual acts as such. They could be used as euphemisms, leaving sufficient ambiguity in relation to a delicate subject such as this one [*i.e.*, the stele of Taimhotep, BMEA inv. 147, l. 15–16[25]], an ambiguity certainly welcome in the context of the tomb, where we find most of these exhortations. In some cases, however, the context, although often using similar euphemisms, is very suggestive of a sexual double entendre."[26]

If one reads the first Demotic tale of pharaoh Ramesses II's semi-legendary son Setna Khaemwaset, *Setna* I,[27] one will tend to agree with the authors. The high priest meets the mysterious priestess of the cat-goddess Bastet, Tabubu, and immediately becomes physically attracted to her.[28] After Setna is invited to her house, he cannot wait to spend time with Tabubu in the bedroom. The priestess, however, delays his needs more and more to assure herself material guarantees from Setna's property. The whole episode itself is a dreamlike vision. Early on we read: "Setna had a fine day (*hrw nfr*) with Tabubu, never having seen a (woman) like her before. Setna said to Tabubu: 'Let us accomplish why we came here!' " (*ir Stne hrw nfr irm Tȝ-bwbwe iw bn-pw=f nwe r pȝy=s smte ʿn sp-2 ḏd Snte n Tȝ-bwbwe my mnq=n tȝ iw.iw=n r bw-nȝy r-ḏbȝ.ṯ=s*) (col. I, l. 18). Other instances of *hrw nfr* in *Setna* I are in the description of a private encounter of a Na-Nefer-Ka-Ptah and his wife Ihwere (col. III, l. 6), and again a bit later (col. III, l. 27, twice; col. IV, l. 5) in the passage about a festival day involving Na-Nefer-Ka-Ptah and priests of Isis in Coptos while at the same time Ihwere likewise celebrates in honor of the goddess with the wives of the priests. Clearly, this points to very different occasions associated with the "fine day" – both private and intimate celebrations and official royal and religious festivals. Both were often marked by fancy meals, drinks and sexual pleasures, maybe until excess, though these elements were not a requirement of observing a "fine day". With a more open approach towards this term, it is easier to include basic meanings such as the "birthday" (*hrw nfr n ms*), which is found on a funerary papyrus of the later Ptolemaic period,[29] or to conclude that it does not require company at all to celebrate a "fine day".[30] Especially in ritual texts such as the *Opening of the Mouth Ceremony*, the "fine day" explicitly refers to the last day on earth, the dying day, when one prepares to enter the afterlife.[31]

In several Theban tombs from the late New Kingdom after the Amarna period (ca. 1320–1070 BC), the *hrw nfr* is depicted in a banquet scene representing the tomb owner, his family and guests in festive events.

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the selection of Egyptian literature by Brunner-Traut/Körber (1996), only straight-laced ideas of an ancient society are represented. For example, in their treatment of the 1st-cent. B.C. funerary stele of Taimhotep, the wife of a high priest of Ptah at Memphis, at p. 59 under the headline "Klage einer jung verstorbenen Frau aus ihrem Grab" Brunner-Traut translates chastely: "O mein Liebster, Freund, mein Mann! Werd es nicht leid, Hoherpriester, zu essen, trunken zu sein und zu lieben nach Lust. Feiere einen schönen Tag! Jeden Tag, jede Nacht folg deinem Herzen, lass keine Sorge in dein Gemüt! Schätze deine Erdenzeit" (stele BMEA inv. 147 [1027]); see Reymond [1981], 165–77, no. 20; the English translation in Lichtheim [1980], 59–65 should be preferred to that of Brunner-Traut).

[24] *O. Leuven dem.* 1 and 2 (= *P. Zauzich* 7 and 8, TM 80909 and 80910), in Depauw/Smith (2004), 67–93 citing examples from Ptolemaic and Roman sources and further literature.

[25] See n. 23.

[26] Depauw/Smith (2004), 81.

[27] See the edition of Goldbrunner (2006).

[28] On this female character, cf. now Vinson (2008), 335–342.

[29] *P. Rhind* 2, I, d1. See the edition of Möller (1913) and translation of Smith, M. (2009), 302–348.

[30] See *P. Harris* 500, *verso*, col. 7, 2, dating roughly to the reigns of Sethi I/Ramesses II in the 13th century BC. This funerary text known as the *Antef Song*, possibly performed by a harpist, is to be understood as a pious wish for the living to enjoy life, be it with or without company.

[31] See *P. Strasb.* 3, *verso*, col. x+II, x+12 (read in *lacuna*), *P. Berlin* 8351, col. 4, 7 and *P. Berlin* 8351, col. 4, 8, edited by Smith, M. (1993), and see also his new translation in *ibid.* (2009), 349–366.

Additionally, harpist's songs written in Hieroglyphics next to a happy gathering encourage the visitor to enjoy life by "celebrating a fine day". These scenes were put up in parts of the tombs which had been open and visible for visitors, such as priests or the family of the deceased. Therefore, the function of the banquet scene is basically to commemorate these festivals in the eyes of the living in its respective private and religious contexts,[32] but another connotation appears here as well: the "memento mori", the reminder to enjoy life on earth since death awaits inevitably at every life's end.[33]

Returning to Ptolemaios's letter, it is quite possibly significant that immediately before the concluding phrase κἀγὼ ἡμέραν καλὴν ἤγαγον the author employs the verb ἐπιχεῖσθαι, which would refer to drinking or anointing oneself (*i.e.*, with perfume, as at a party). Since the second-person imperative (ἐπιχέου) appears, this has been understood as Ptolemaios's encouragement to Achilles that he should celebrate in such manner.[34] Due to the loss of several lines between *frags.* 2 and 3 the precise context is unknown, though it seems possible that Achilles was to celebrate what Ptolemaios had learned regarding "in what way the gods know you" (ὃν τρόπον οἱ θεοί σε οἴδασιν), and perhaps to honor the gods in this manner. However, another interpretation is worth considering: ἐπιχέου might be from a direct quote attributed by Ptolemaios in the missing lines to a priest, or else a divine or human figure seen in his dream, who was bidding *Ptolemaios* to drink or anoint himself. After all, if Ptolemaios had been celebrating a *hrw nfr* it would have been odd to encourage Achilles with "ἐπιχέου", when the letter would have reached him after this occasion had ended. If, however, this word came at the end of a quote, it would reveal that Ptolemaios himself had been instructed to partake of alcohol or unguent after awakening from his dream – whereupon he "celebrated a fine day". There is substantial evidence showing that at least some festivals – most notably, Hathor's Feast of Drunkenness – were viewed by the Egyptians as particularly auspicious occasions for seeking divine dreams, just as they were for more traditional types of oracular inquiries.[35] Therefore, even though the rest of the sentence is lost and its full meaning impossible to determine, the ending of Ptolemaios's letter may be directly related to the situation described throughout the second fragment: it appears likely that Ptolemaios had been celebrating some sort of multi-day festival, and that he spent a night during that period engaging in dream-divination at an unidentified sanctuary. Thus the phrase κἀγὼ ἡμέραν καλὴν ἤγαγον may represent indirect evidence for Ptolemaios's dream having been received through incubation.[36]

If Ptolemaios did indeed receive his dreams at a sanctuary, it might have belonged to the one divinity named in the Demotic text: Psais (Ψάις), a Greek transliteration of the Egyptian Shaï (*Š(ꜣ)y*), commonly prefixed by the definite article *pꜣ*.[37] As a divinity, Shaï represented the manifestation of the divine will, *i.e.* fate, and therefore was often equated with the Greek Agathodaimon or Tyche. Shaï regularly appeared together with other divinities of the Egyptian pantheon, and in Greco-Roman times most frequently with Hathor.[38] In Dendera, the main cult center of this goddess, she is even characterized as *nb.(t) Š(ꜣ)y* – "mis-

[32] See Assmann (1991), 200–213, focussing on the unity of fancy meals/drinks/drunkenness, sound/singing/music/dance/recitation, perfume/ornaments and beautiful people/erotic pleasures as a "Gesamtkunstwerk" and "Entalltäglichung" (p. 204), but clearly distancing these events from orgies (p. 208). In light of texts such as *O. Leuven dem.* 1 and 2 (see n. 24), this conclusion can clearly be dismissed. Assmann also links the *hrw nfr* scene from the Theban tombs with rituals praising Hathor (p. 203).

[33] See Assmann (1991), 220–223. Theban tombs (TT) featuring *hrw nfr* scenes include Tjanefer (TT 158, song 1, text F 6), Thotemhab (TT 194, text F 7), Amunemhab (TT 364, text F 6), Samut (TT 409, text M 3), Inherchau (TT 359 text D 8), Paser (TT 106, text C 4), and Neferhotep (TT 50, song 1, text B, 6 featuring the famous *Antef Song* also preserved on *P. Harris* 500 = P. BMEA 10060, *recto* l. 6–7). (For the editions of these texts see the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*, http://aaew2.bbaw.de/tla/, from which this list was compiled.)

[34] See, *e.g.*, *Chrest.Wilck.* I, 75, n. 17: "Der sonst so ernste Brief findet einen heiteren Abschluß. Ptolemaios fordert Achilleus auf, er solle sich einschenken lassen (vielleicht auf das Wohl des und des), wie er auch selbst einen fröhlichen Tag gefeiert habe."

[35] The link between Egyptian festivals and dream-divination will be discussed in G. H. Renberg, *Where Dreams May Come. Incubation Sanctuaries in the Greco-Roman World* (in preparation).

[36] On Ptolemaios and incubation, see "Comments", section 4.

[37] On this god, see Quaegebeur (1975) and Morenz/Müller (1960), especially pp. 25–30.

[38] See Quaegebeur (1975), 76–109.

tress of Shaï", who "delivers Shaï to everyone who loves it".[39] Inscriptions with the same formulation can be found on the temple walls of Edfu, Kalabsha and Kom Ombo. Additionally, Egyptian literature provides multiple examples of the connection between Hathor and fate.[40] Although it is possible that Ptolemaios's letter pertains to activities at a cult site of Psais/Shaï, this divinity is not known to have had his own temple, and there is at best limited evidence for his having had small local cults at a few sites – undoubtedly a function of his having been an intangible quality rather than a god who was to be worshiped in his own right.[41]

In the *interpretatio Graeca* Hathor was associated with Aphrodite, and it is tempting instead to identify both the sanctuary and the festival with Hathor/Aphrodite – which would certainly explain why Ptolemaios had made a reference to some form of revelry, and used a phrase commonly associated with drunken and licentious celebrations.[42] However, since *hrw nfr* was on the one hand a very common expression of celebration or holiday, and on the other hand had very distinct connotations applying to certain religious or private situations, we cannot be certain that Ptolemaios did participate in a feast involving drinks, merriment and dreams. Moreover, even if Ptolemaios did celebrate a festival of Hathor it would be impossible to know whether it was the Feast of Drunkenness itself: not only were there numerous festivals of Hathor celebrated on different occasions and according to local traditions, but at Dendera, the center of her worship, the Feast of Drunkenness is recorded in late Ptolemaic or early Roman inscriptions to have been held around Thoth 19/20 – a month earlier than the date of Phaophi 26 on Ptolemaios's letter. Thus it is possible to speculate about a connection and whether Ptolemaios merely delayed in writing to Achilles, but a different festival, or else a Feast of Drunkenness held elsewhere and later, seems at least as likely.[43]

2. The Possible Religious Background of ὃν τρόπον οἱ θεοί σε οἴδασιν

Ptolemaios's intention to write a letter to Achilles may also feed from another Egyptian background, if his statement that he was fully describing the dream "so that you would know in what way the gods know you" (ὅπως εἰδῆις ὃν τρόπον | οἱ θεοί σε οἴδασιν) was more than the casual comment that it at first seems.[44] With this phrase the writer wants to inform Achilles of what he dreamed, probably so that the addressee might take steps of an unspecified nature. In general, information gained by dreams was not considered to be inevitably fated in Egyptian thinking. Papyrological and other sources dating back to the Pharaonic period reveal certain ritual actions aimed at defending against harmful divine "plans" by means of divination and magic. This phenomenon involving the identification of potential threats and their altering or outright avoidance is represented most clearly in the so-called "Oracular Amuletic Decrees" known from the late New Kingdom and the Third Intermediate Period.[45] These papyrus amulets were considered to have been issued for an individual presumably as a kind of oracular statement by gods such as Mut or Amun and worn inside a locket around the neck, so as to protect the bearer from diseases, evil demons and other harassment attributed to male and female malevolent spirits. Among the most common phrases of these amulets were those intended to act apotropaically against evil dreams seen by the individual himself or herself, or else witnessed by someone else but concerning this individual – dreams that were expected to have a negative impact in real life if not neutralized. The example with the most elaborate dream-content, for example,

[39] See Quaegebeur (1975), 81–83. Hathor's qualities as donor of fate are often manifested into two divinities representing different aspects of fate: Shaï and Reret/Renenet.

[40] See Quaegebeur (1975), 81–83.

[41] While purely an abstract force in Pharaonic times, beginning in Ptolemaic times Shaï acquired the identities of creator god and protector spirit (see Morenz/Müller [1960], 25–28; Quaegebeur [1975], 160–170; Lazlo Kakosý in *Lex.Äg.* 5 [1984], 524–526, *s.v.* "Schai" and Christian Leitz et al. in *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen* [*OLA* 116, Leuven: 2002], 7:4–8, *s.v.* "Schai"). Small local cults of Shaï have been detected at Akhmim, Esna, Dendera and Gebel el-Silsila. Therefore, the possibility that Ptolemaios visited a site devoted to this god cannot be ruled out.

[42] Cf. François Daumas in *Lex.Äg.* 2 (1977), 1034–1039, *s.v.* "Hathorfeste".

[43] Maresch has drawn our attention to another Hathor festival in Phaophi: the Χαρμόσυνα attested in Soknopaiou Nesos (see Perpillou-Thomas [1993], 36, 75–76).

[44] We are grateful to Hans-Werner Fischer-Elfert for sharing his thoughts on this passage.

[45] See Edwards (1960) and Szpakowska (2003), 181–183.

includes the following passage: "We [*i.e*. the gods issuing this decree] shall make every dream, which she [*i.e*. the individual for whom the amulet is created] has seen, good; we shall make every dream, which any male, any female, or any person of any kind in the whole land has seen for her, good; we shall make every dream, which any male, any female, or any person of any kind in the whole land will see for her, good; we shall say with regard to them (something) good."[46] Overall, the basic principle behind Oracular Amuletic Decrees pertaining to dreams was that dreams could sometimes bear a distinct danger, but this danger could be identified and then channeled and altered, or even prevented. Ptolemaios's use of the unusual phrase "so that you would know in what way the gods know you", which does not appear to reflect a typically Greek theological concept, may well represent the survival into Ptolemaic times of this Pharaonic-era belief, if he wrote Achilles in order to inform him about divine decisions revealed in his dream so that Achilles might take steps to "correct" the future. One might further speculate that the Demotic sentence on the *verso* in fragment 2, line 3–4, "Psais, <the> great god, knows your name, I recognized (?) it in my heart", stands as sort of an answer or conclusion of Ptolemaios to the question of how the gods would know Achilles. Unfortunately, the incomplete nature of both the Greek and Demotic texts of our papyrus makes it inadvisable to conclude with certainty that this is what Ptolemaios meant, but the possibility of an age-old Egyptian religious belief being one of the primary reasons – if not *the* primary reason – for his having sent Achilles this letter and dream account is worth considering.

3. Issues of Ethnicity and Bilingualism

Ptolemaios's letter has long been recognized as both a rare example of a Greco-Demotic private document and early evidence for bilingualism in Ptolemaic Egypt's native population.[47] As the apparent translation of the phrase *ir hrw nfr* into Greek shows, however, this papyrus is not merely noteworthy because it was written in both Greek and Demotic: more significantly, it presents an overlooked example of the Egyptian language being transferred into Greek. Since the publication of the first two Greek fragments by Goodspeed there has been a modest amount of debate regarding the ethnicity of Ptolemaios and Achilles, with Crönert first suggesting that Ptolemaios was Egyptian and subsequently Witkowski concluding that both men were native Egyptians, while Wilcken initially considered both to have been Greeks exposed to Egyptian influence but later changed his mind.[48] The primary reason for identifying both as Egyptians was that Ptolemaios switched into Demotic to describe the dream – and, indeed, the very fact that he dreamed in Egyptian is compelling evidence of his own ethnicity.[49] Also of possible significance is the fact that his

[46] Edwards (1960), Turin 1, *recto*, ll. 17–26.

[47] On the importance of this papyrus as an example of bilingualism, see Depauw (1997), 42–43.

[48] In his review of Goodspeed, Crönert was the first to suggest that Ptolemaios was Egyptian, or at least closely associated himself with Egyptians (Crönert [1903], 730–731), and he was followed in this by Witkowski [1913], 21–22). In his commentary on this papyrus Wilcken instead concluded that both writer and recipient were Greek, though with Egyptian wives (*Chrest.Wilck*. I, pp. 73–74), but after reading the article by Witkowski from the following year he changed his mind regarding Achilles's ethnicity, while not addressing that of Ptolemaios (*UPZ* I, pp. 366–367, n. 3). Other than a brief reference by Willy Peremans and the recent treatment of this papyrus in the collection of translated Hellenistic documents by Bagnall and Derow (Peremans [1964], 56–57; Bagnall/Derow [2004], 229, no. 136), which both echo Wilcken's original position, it has been accepted that this papyrus was written by one Egyptian to another (as in Depauw [2009], 119 most recently).

[49] Such evidence, though compelling, is not conclusive, as is illustrated by comparanda from Saqqara's Ḥor and Ptolemaios archives, both dating to the middle of the second century B.C. One need only point to the Demotic dream texts evidently recorded by Apollonios, brother of this Ptolemaios and fellow "recluse" (ἐνκάτοχος), for an example of an individual whose father was a Macedonian *cleruch* but who seems to have been fluent enough to dream in Egyptian (*P. Dem.Bologna* 3171 and 3173; edited in Bresciani *et al*. [1978], 95–104, cf. *BLDem*, 629; *contra* Bresciani *et al*. see Goudriaan [1988], 44–46, who argues that the dream was indeed received by Apollonios but that he was not the one who wrote the account; on the bilingualism of Apollonios and Ptolemaios, see Legras [2007], 259–260). On the other hand, a Greek papyrus written in Ptolemaios's hand but recording dreams received by an Egyptian associate named Nektembēs may present a situation closely paralleling the one found in the letter from Ptolemaios to Achilles (*UPZ* I 79). This document consists of a summary of eight dreams that Nektembēs received on the nights of May 4 and 23, 159 B.C., and since Ptolemaios writes that these dreams were "about the twins and myself" (πρεὶ (= περὶ) τοον (= τῶν) διδυμῶν καὶ ἐμ' αὐτοῦ) (l. 2; cf. ll. 13–14) – "twins" referring to the two girls for whom Ptolemaios acted as guardian – it is clear that Nektembēs shared them for Ptolemaios's benefit, just as the other

dream partly concerned an Egyptian god, although the growing appeal of Shaï to Egypt's Greek population in Ptolemaic times renders this inconclusive evidence.[50] On top of this, the translation of *ir hrw nfr* into Greek considerably strengthens the conclusion that Ptolemaios was Egyptian: although it is possible that the Egyptian expression had filtered into common Greek speech, in which case his use of κἀγὼ ἡμέραν καλὴν ἤγαγον would not argue for or against his being an Egyptian, Ptolemaios's apparent use of the phrase in reference to celebrating an Egyptian festival in an Egyptian manner *is* potential evidence of his ethnicity.[51] Similarly, if the phrase ὅπως εἰδῆις ὃν τρόπον οἱ θεοί σε οἴδασιν does allude to an Egyptian theological concept with its roots dating back to the New Kingdom (if not earlier) it might also support this identification, at least for Ptolemaios.[52]

Therefore, Witkowski's position that these two individuals should be considered part of the small group of Egyptians for whom Greek names are attested in the 3rd century B.C. – before this had become a more common practice – appears correct, though with one caveat: it cannot be ruled out that one or both came from mixed families. While some Egyptians, especially those working in administrative positions, would adopt Greek names, there are numerous examples of individuals apparently born with "double names", *i.e.* both a Greek and Demotic name.[53] In the case of Ptolemaios and Achilles there is no indication of their having had an Egyptian name as well – but this is not necessarily significant, since double names typically

Ptolemaios had written Achilles several decades earlier about a dream that somehow concerned the recipient (and possibly one or both of the girls or women named in the letter). The parallel between the two documents is made even stronger by the fact that one of the dream summaries features transliterated Egyptian, indicating that Nektembēs, too, had dreamed in his native language, and that he or Ptolemaios had left certain elements, presumably those not easily translated, in transliterated form (ll. 3–5: τὸ δεύτερ[ον]· | *Φαφερε σι ενρεηξ* Παῦνι ἐν τῷ Βουβαστ⟨εί⟩ῳ *χμεννι* ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ | τῷ Ἄμμωνος *πελ λελ χασον χανι*). (For the issues associated with the bilingual aspects of this dream account, see Legras *ibid*., 260–261. Though Legras suggests that Nektembēs, being "un parfait bilingue", dreamed in both languages, it is at least as likely that he dreamed in Egyptian and left untranslated what he could not easily render into Greek.)

A very different, though nonetheless comparable, situation is to be seen in some of the numerous *ostraca* written by Ḥor of Sebennytos, a minor cult official serving at Saqqara around the same time that Ptolemaios and Nektembēs were living there, and who during a crisis seems to have gained the king's ear (collected in *O. Hor*, supplemented by Ray [1978]; cf. *BLDem*, 413–420). Among these *ostraca*, the overwhelming majority of which were written in Ḥor's native Demotic, are several drafts of a Greek letter sent to the king in order to inform him of a prophetic dream affecting royal interests (*O. Hor*, Greek Texts A–E [= SB X 10574]). From multiple dream-narratives preserved in the archive, some appearing in more than one draft, it is clear that Ḥor dreamed in Egyptian, as would be expected. Since the drafts of his Greek letter only allude to an important dream, it appears likely that the Greek text served to introduce a more detailed account of the dream written in Demotic, much as Ptolemaios had done. As is shown by an *ostracon* preserving a lengthy birthday encomium to Ptolemy VI Philometor which is then followed by a petition of some sort, Ḥor felt quite comfortable writing the king in his own native language (*O. Hor* 4), and it is possible that on the occasion when Ḥor addressed Philometor and Ptolemy "the Brother" in the Alexandria *Sarapeum* he spoke in Egyptian rather than Greek, at least when pronouncing his dream-oracle about the withdrawal of Seleucid forces from Egypt (*O. Hor* 2; on Ḥor's interactions with the Ptolemies and Ptolemaic officials, see *O. Hor*, pp. 119–121 *et pass*.).

[50] For Shaï's identification with the Agathodaimon, see above. This god's importance to at least some in the Greek population is revealed by the number of theophoric names derived from "Psais" (Quaegebeur [1975], 170–176, 179–186).

[51] Admittedly, the letter also appears to include a probable reinterpretation of the Greek epistolary formula εὐτύχει into Demotic (see note to *frag*. 2, *verso*, l. 3), but this need not be taken as evidence that Ptolemaios was Greek: since both Ptolemaios and Achilles were probably Egyptians working somewhere in the Ptolemaic administration, it would not be surprising for them to convert Greek words and phrases they commonly used in their professional lives into their native language.

[52] See "Comments", section 2.

[53] On double names, mixed families and related issues, see Clarysse (1992), 51–56 and Quaegebeur (1992), 265–272. For an instructive example of an individual with a double name, see Clarysse (1992), 52–53, on a man living in the late-3rd century B.C. who had a father of cleruchic background and an Egyptian mother, and was named both Neoptolemos and Onnophris. Demonstrating how complicated these issues of Egyptian and Hellenic identity could be during this period are two examples of pairs of brothers that included one with an Egyptian name and another with a Greek name, with only the latter exempt from an *obol*-tax that Egyptians but not Hellenes were required to pay (*P. LilleDem* III 101, *recto*, iv. 27–29 and v. 18–21, discussed in Thompson [1992], 326). Also interesting is the case of the ἀρχισωματοφύλαξ and διοικητής under Ptolemy V, Dioskourides, who was equipped with an Egyptian sarcophagus on which the name, filiation and title were rendered in hieroglyphs, suggesting to its editor, Philippe Collombert, that Dioskourides was the descendant of a Greek father and an Egyptian mother (Louvre inv. D 40; see Collombert [2000], 56–57). For a survey of naming patterns and practices in Ptolemaic Egypt, see Clarysse/Thompson (2006), 318–341 (especially pp. 323–328). See also Thompson (2001) for a broad survey of issues of Hellenic identity in Egypt.

appear in legal or quasi-legal documents, and might not have been thought necessary in a personal letter.[54] Therefore, one or both men might have been the offspring of a Greek father and Egyptian mother, and thus belonged to both cultures.

Even though there should now be even less doubt regarding the ethnicity of Ptolemaios and Achilles, there remains the question of why Ptolemaios wrote in Greek to begin with.[55] Whether this was because one or both worked in the Ptolemaic administration and routinely used Greek, or had mixed parentage and therefore had learned to read and speak Greek, or Ptolemaios had another reason is impossible to know.[56] As Wilcken once stated, the Ptolemaios papyrus presents a "Problem der Zweisprachigkeit" – but now, with the recognition of Egyptian elements in the Greek portion of this document and a greater appreciation of the Demotic text, the nature of that problem has changed. This would have come as no surprise to Wilcken, who concluded his treatment of the text with the following words: "Der Wert solcher Stücke, deren Erklärung nicht zur Evidenz gebracht werden kann, liegt mehr daran, daß sie uns zum Nachdenken anregen."

4. The "Fine Day" Papyrus and Incubation

As the mention of the girl Taunchis in the Demotic dream-narrative reveals, Ptolemaios dreamed about the subject of at least one of the two letters that he wrote just before going to sleep. Wilcken reasonably concluded that this would not have been a coincidence, but rather suggests that Ptolemaios had engaged in incubation.[57] Wilcken cited as parallels both the oracular tablets of Dodona and Ammianus Marcellinus's note that those making inquiries of the oracle of Bes at Abydos would submit written questions in person or send them from afar as well as the examples of oracle questions discovered in Egypt,[58] but it was the discovery of an *ostracon* at the sanctuary of Amenhotep/Amenothes at Deir el-Bahri a few decades later that provided the closest parallel. The *ostracon*, a limestone flake which preserves an edited draft of a dedicatory text that was probably inscribed on a stele or some other object, recounts the events leading up to the medical recovery of a long-suffering individual named Polyaratos in 261/0 B.C.[59] In the middle of the narrative, just after describing how in his despair over not finding a cure at the hands of the medical community, Polyaratos originally wrote that he had "fled to the temple of Amenothes as a suppliant according to the declaration of suppliancy upon which the matters are written", but then crossed out parts of this phrase (καταέφυγον~~τος δέ μου~~ | [εἰς τὸ ἰε]ρὸν τὸ τοῦ Ἀμενώτου [ἱκ]έτης ~~κατὰ ἱκετηρίαν ἧς τὰ ἀντ[ί]|[γ]ραφα~~) (ll. 10b, 25–26). The part that was deleted before the text was copied refers to a "declaration of suppliancy", which suggests a similar practice to traditional Egyptian "Letters to the Gods".[60] However, since Polyaratos next refers to regaining his health "with Amenothes standing beside me" (τοῦ Ἀμενώτου παρ̣[στάν]|τος)

[54] We have been advised by Mark Depauw, who wrote the definitive work on Demotic letters (Depauw [2006]), that there is no published example of such a letter with a double name for the signature (personal communication).

[55] The converse question, why he wrote part of the letter in Demotic, is not as much of a mystery: if Ptolemaios dreamed in Egyptian and his dream featured phrases, wordplay or concepts that were alien to Greek, as is typical of the surviving Demotic dream narratives, it would have been difficult to convey the contents of his dream "precisely". Wilcken's suggestion that Ptolemaios wrote in Egyptian for some unspecified religious reason – a conclusion reached when still under the impression that Ptolemaios was Greek – should therefore be dismissed (*Chrest.Wilck*. I, p. 74).

[56] For a very different manifestation of Greco-Demotic bilingualism, see the overview of the challenging Greek and Demotic *ostraca* from Medînet Mâdi (Narmouthis) featuring loan words and code switching strategies presented by Menchetti (2009), 223–41 with more literature.

[57] *UPZ* I, pp. 366–367, n. 3. Cf. *RAC* XVIII (1997), 200, *s.v.* "Inkubation" (Manfred Wacht). The first to link this papyrus to incubation was not Wilcken, however, but Koukoules, who in attempting a new restoration of *frag.* 2, *recto* l. 13 had earlier compared Ptolemaios's writing the letters to practices known in magical papyri (Koukoules [1912], 482, citing *Pap. Graec. Mag.* VII 746–747, part of a procedure for dream-divination that involved placing a strip of foil with writing under one's pillow). Goodspeed himself wrote that perhaps Ptolemaios had "dreamed of the subject of the letters, and wrote to acquaint his friend with the dream", but did not refer to incubation. Whether Goodspeed, whose Greek edition preceded Spiegelberg's Demotic edition, was being prescient or had been informed of the contents of the dream-narrative is unknown.

[58] Amm. Marc. 19.12.3–4. For the Dodona tablets, see Lhôte (2006).

[59] Łajtar (2006), no. A1 + fig. 26 (photo), 23–26, 51–53, *et pass.* (with refs.).

[60] For Demotic letters to the gods, see *P. Götterbriefe* and Depauw (2006), 307–313.

it appears that Polyaratos was among those who had engaged in incubation at the site – although the term παραστάντος might also have been metaphorical – and thus "the matters that are written" would have been a letter written by him sometime before going to sleep.[61] Ptolemaios's dream was not health-related and there is no reason to think that he was functioning as a suppliant, but he does appear to have engaged in a form of dream-divination requiring that he put his question or questions in writing.[62] This conclusion is supported by the fact that Ptolemaios employs the diminutive term ἐπιστόλιον: even though there is no parallel for ἐπιστόλιον being used in reference to an oracle question or petition to a god, this word, which is to be found in well over a hundred papyri, would have been perfectly appropriate.[63] While the possibility that Ptolemaios was engaging in a divinatory ritual in a private setting rather than at a sanctuary cannot be completely dismissed, the evidence for soliciting dream-oracles from the gods privately is exclusively from the Roman period.[64] Therefore, Ptolemaios appears to have been practicing incubation at a sanctuary where inquirers were required to write out their questions (or bring questions previously written), as had been done for centuries at more conventional Egyptian oracular shrines, and the two or three ἐπιστόλια were thus functionally equivalent to the hundreds of "oracle questions" surviving in Hieroglyphic, Demotic, Greek and Coptic all over Egypt. Whether that was a sanctuary of Psais is uncertain, however, not only because there is little evidence for cult sites devoted to this god, but also because those engaging in incubation at one god's sanctuary could receive dreams associated with another.[65] Whether Ptolemaios would have had need to consult an expert at dream-interpretation after awakening is likewise uncertain, though it must be considered a possibility.[66]

5. Priests in Dreams

In his discussion of Ptolemaios's papyrus Wilcken speculated that the priest appearing in the dream corresponded to the one who had received the ἐπιστόλια.[67] Though certainly an intriguing possibility, there is good reason to conclude that this need not have been the case: priests often appeared in dreams,

[61] For incubation at Deir el-Bahri, see Łajtar (2006), 50–60 *et pass*.

[62] It is curious that even though two letters were written by Ptolemaios before going to sleep and he appears to have had a third that was previously prepared, he reports having received a single dream. Perhaps the other girl was mentioned in the part of the Demotic text that is now missing; it is also possible that he received two or more dreams, just as Nektembēs has received multiple dreams in a single night (see n. 49), but only one was of interest to Achilles.

[63] The most common Greek phrases or terms for the slips of papyrus bearing oracle questions were ἐκ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς, σύμβολον, γράπτον, and πιττάκιον, with the latter surviving as the Coptic loanword **ⲡⲓⲧⲧⲁⲕⲓⲛ**. While ἐκ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς (*e.g.*, *SB* XXVI 16732) might correspond to the Demotic *m-sḫ* ("written"), it is quite possible that ἐπιστόλιον corresponded to *b(ꜣ)k* or *ẖ̈k*, both Demotic terms for "letter" or "note". (The term *ẖ̈k* appears in a single oracle question – an unpublished text from Saqqara, S. 71/2-DP 20, discussed by Smith, H. S. (2002), 368 – and in just one other document (*P. Loeb* 7.2), leading to a dispute regarding whether *b(ꜣ)k* should be read instead: see Erichsen, *Glossar*, 659, *s.v. ẖ̈k*; Depauw (2006), 257, 304–306; Ryholt (2006), 152–153. On the different Greek and Egyptian terms for oracle questions and the genre in general, see Naether (2010), 359–410.

[64] On the shift from revelation rituals for summoning a god (*pḥ-nṯr*, "god's arrival") being solely the domain of priests to their being performed by others as well in Roman times, see Ritner (1993), 99, 214–220 and Frankfurter (2000), 180–181.

[65] See, *e.g.*, *O. Hor* 13, which shows that Ḥor of Sebennytos, who served Thoth as a scribe or in some other capacity at Saqqara, had spent two days invoking not only the divinized ibises entombed within the "House of Thoth", but also Osorapis and Osormnevis. While the former was the foremost god of the Saqqara bluff, the latter was his equivalent at Heliopolis (but had some sort of presence in the Memphis area as well). For what is known of sanctuaries of Psais, see n. 41.

[66] There is no reason to accept Crönert's suggestion that Achilles may have been a dream-interpreter (Crönert [1903], 731): not only was Witkowski correct in his response pointing out that Achilles was receiving the letter because Ptolemaios's dream pertained to him (Witkowski [1913], 22), but there are other papyri preserving descriptions of dreams shared with someone to whom the dream pertained by a dreamer who made no claim to expertise at dream-interpretation (*e.g.*, *UPZ* I 79 [see n. 49], *P. Cair.Zen*. I 59034).

[67] *UPZ* I, pp. 366–367, n. 3. For the evidence indicating the involvement of Egyptian priests in the preparation and submission of oracle questions, as well as the limited evidence suggesting that individuals at least occasionally could write out their own questions, see Husson/Valbelle (1998), 1068–1071. This papyrus might represent additional evidence for individuals who could write submitting oracle questions that they had written themselves.

including those solicited by means of incubation.[68] As is revealed by Greek and Latin technical writings on dream-interpretation, dreams that featured authority figures such as a priest or parent could be especially significant. According to Macrobius, these even belonged to a special category: "It is an *oraculum* when in sleep a parent or some other revered or important figure, a priest or even a god, openly forecasts what will or will not happen, what ought to be done or avoided" (*… est oraculum quidem cum in somnis parens vel aliqua sancta gravisve persona seu sacerdos vel etiam deus aperte eventurum quid aut non eventurum, faciendum vitandumve denuntiat*).[69] Greek and Roman authors provide some examples of this phenomenon: according to a post-Herodotean tradition regarding Mardonius's inquiry of Amphiaraos through incubation-by-proxy, his representative dreamed of a cult official (ὑπηρέτης) rather than the god;[70] Pausanias records that Epaminondas saw a prophetic dream in which the oracle was spoken by a divine figure resembling a hierophant;[71] Aelius Aristides wrote in his *Sacred Tales* about a dream featuring a priest of Asklepios, in which he himself was also dressed as one;[72] and, Apuleius's character Lucius dreams of the high priest (*summus sacerdos*) of Isis predicting that Lucius's lost belongings would reappear, and this proves true.[73] In the one epigraphical source attesting to this phenomenon, Marcus Iulius Apellas Idrieus in his lengthy account of traveling to Epidauros and engaging in incubation there refers to a dream in which a course of treatment was indicated to him and then a priest of Asklepios said, "You are cured, but must pay the medical fees" (τεθεράπευσαι, χρὴ δὲ ἀποδιδόναι τὰ ἴατρα).[74]

Although all of this evidence from Greek and Latin sources dates to the Roman Imperial period and thus might be dismissed as irrelevant to the Ptolemaios papyrus, especially if Ptolemaios was an Egyptian, Demotic evidence matches this pattern. Up to three of the *ostraca* in the Ḥor Archive, which dates to the mid-second century B.C., show that this resident of the Saqqara *Sarapeum* – himself serving the god Thoth in a minor capacity – sometimes dreamed of priests. The best example is an *ostracon* that preserves two dreams quite possibly received through incubation, the first of which features a *web*-priest of Imhotep and the second of which might have featured the god himself.[75] A second *ostracon* is somewhat more ambiguous, but is thought to preserve a dream-oracle because Ḥor describes seeing a prophet (*[ḥm-]ntr*), priest (*ḫr-ḥb*), and two sisters, who are said to represent four divinities.[76] A third document belonging to the archive that features a dream-narrative is damaged, but appears to refer to a priest having been seen.[77] Elsewhere in Egypt, at Karnak, an individual who in 265 B.C. slept in the sanctuary of Amun and miraculously recovered his eyesight appears to have recorded in a dream-narrative that he envisioned a priest speaking,[78] while one of the dreams recorded on a limestone flake thought to be from Deir el-Bahari involved a person evidently known to the dreamer appearing at a formal meal as a "prophet of the house of Ptaḥ" (*ḥm-ntr Pr-Ptḥ*).[79] And, in addition to these accounts left by individuals, an incubatory procedure described in the Late Antique Demotic magical papyrus preserved at London and Leiden specifically states that Imhotep will appear "in the likeness of a priest wearing clothes of βύσσος on his back and wearing sandals on his

[68] Apparently it also was not uncommon to dream that one was himself or herself a priest, as was recorded by Artemidorus in the *Oneirokritikon* (Artem. 2.30, p. 153 Pack), and experienced by Aelius Aristides (see n. 72).

[69] Macrob., *In Somn*. 1.3.8. Cf. Artem. 1.2, p. 6 Pack, on the categorization of χρηματισμοί.

[70] Plut., *De def. or.* 5 (= 412AB); Arist., *Or.* 19.1–2. On this episode, see Sineux (2008), 190–191.

[71] Paus. 4.26.6.

[72] Arist., *Or*. 47.15.

[73] Apul., *Met*. 11.20.

[74] *IG* IV² 1, 126, l. 20.

[75] *O. Hor* 59, ll. 3–7. Re-edited by Quack (2002). Ray's reading of "priests" slightly later in the text was rejected by Quack (*ibid*., 248nn. *d*, 81).

[76] *O. Hor* 15, *recto*, ll. 5–7.

[77] *O. Hor* 13, ll. 8–12 (with note at p. 56n.*j*).

[78] *O. Brook*. 37.1821E = Vleeming (2001), no. 135. The passage featuring the priest is in an unpublished fragment of this small stele, kept in Krakow, which is being edited by H.-J. Thissen, who kindly shared a copy of the text with us.

[79] *O. Nicholson R*. 98, l. 7 (published in Ray [1999]; cf. *id*. [2006], 216–218).

feet" (*iw=f n pꜣ smte n wˁ wˁb iw=f ṯꜣy šs-nsw ḥr-ꜣt.ṯ=f iw=f ṯꜣy še r r.ṯ=f*).[80] Therefore, Wilcken's suggestion regarding the priest in Ptolemaios's dream being the recipient of the two letters is worth considering, but cannot be accepted with confidence. Just as some of the aforementioned dreamers would have interacted with the priest who appeared in their dreams, there is no reason why Ptolemaios's dream-priest could not have been an individual whom Ptolemaios had at least seen, and quite possibly knew. But it could also be that Ptolemaios imagined a priest on whom he had never set eyes – and since Ptolemaios used an indefinite article to refer to "a priest" (*wˁ wˁb*) rather than to "the priest" this is perhaps more likely. If so, it is possible that this priest was thought to represent the god Psais, or perhaps another god, as had been the understanding of Ḥor on at least one occasion, and as was supposed to occur if one followed the ritual instructions in the magical papyrus.

Conclusion

When fully considered, this papyrus appears to represent evidence not only for bilingualism among Egypt's native population in the third century B.C., but also for the translation of Egyptian expressions into Greek by individuals belonging to both the "native" and "foreign" spheres. The most overt manifestation of this is the rendering of the Egyptian expression *ir hrw nfr*, "to celebrate a fine day", into Greek, which only occurs in this text. The concept of the "fine day" – with all its culinary, sensual and erotic delights and ritual implications – allows further glimpses into daily life in Egypt's multicultural milieu. Starting with Ptolemaios's intention to inform his addressee Achilles about a dream he had experienced, this letter points to an important religious context that has been largely overlooked. As is known from the Oracular Amuletic Decrees of the Late New Kingdom and the Third Intermediate Period, Egyptians observed their dreams carefully and tried to determine what the gods decreed for their futures. According to their beliefs, however, fate could be altered by taking certain steps. Apparently with this belief in mind, Ptolemaios wrote a letter to Achilles, who was presumably a fellow Egyptian. He started in Greek, the *lingua franca* of the time and possibly the language both men used professionally or which for sociolinguistic reasons was felt by Ptolemaios to be proper for a personal letter, but switched to Demotic for the core subject of the document, the dream narrative, in order to ensure that his reader would perfectly understand what had been prophesied to Ptolemaios when he consulted one or more gods, presumably during a festival. This might explain why the letter has not been written solely in Demotic but demonstrates interphrasal code-switching (*i.e.*, changing from one language to another with a new sentence), which is a phenomenon commonly observed with bilingual individuals. On the one hand, this letter represents evidence of multilingualism during the Ptolemaic period, but on the other hand, it shows that Greek and Egyptian identities did not blend into each other completely. Thus, for example, ethnicity evidently had an influence on interpretations and perceptions of what was seen while sleeping or obtaining a vision. Ptolemaios' letter might be significant for another reason as well: if his dreams were derived by means of incubatory practices, this would be among the earliest sources for this divinatory method from Egypt, and especially noteworthy since it seemingly was performed by a private individual rather than a mantic specialist such as a priest. This document is also quite significant for a very different reason: it demonstrates the importance of editing and studying bilingual documents in their entirety, without which one risks drawing incomplete and imprecise conclusions.

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Gil H. Renberg, University of Michigan, 2160 Angell Hall, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1003, USA
grenberg@umich.edu

Franziska Naether, Universität Leipzig, Ägyptologisches Institut/Ägyptisches Museum – Georg Steindorff –, Goethestraße 2, 04109 Leipzig, Germany
Naether@uni-leipzig.de